

The last days of Mrs May



Yesterday more authority drained away from the Prime Minister. By the time she got to her Statement of her revised offer on the Withdrawal Treaty the Conservative benches were much more than half empty. Those of us who stayed explained again why we opposed her draft Treaty. The front bench contained mainly her hard core pro EU supporters, Philip Hammond, David Liddington, Amber Rudd, Greg Clark, Rory Stewart and James Brokenshire. It was a fitting visual backdrop for a Statement which failed to appeal to new votes in a Commons which has already voted it down on three separate occasions.

I gave the PM the opportunity to say something to Leave supporters around the country, explaining again to Mrs May that many who voted Leave do not regard the Withdrawal Treaty as leaving. It binds us into EU rules, payments and the rest for a further 21 to 45 months with no guaranteed clean way out at the end of that period. She had nothing to say to us. She repeated the mantra that her Agreement was leaving without tackling the strong hostility to it in the country and the obvious facts that it locks us back into making big payments, accepting all their laws and allowing freedom of movement for many more months.

I find it curious that the Cabinet has not yet moved to explain to the PM that she cannot continue. A number of the Cabinet want to run for Leader, and some are actively running proto campaigns for the role of PM. They should first remove Mrs May. It is against the spirit of decent conduct to be campaigning to replace her whilst in cabinet saying they support her and her policies. It may also make it much more difficult for any of them to win, as their first leadership task is to show they know how to secure the exit of the PM they wish to replace. By evening we got word that at last one member of the Cabinet resigned because she could not go along with the Withdrawal Treaty Bill after all. Still we are not allowed to see the Bill, so worried is the government about it.

If Mrs May somehow manages to struggle on into June and puts her Withdrawal Agreement Bill to the vote, those who vote for it will demonstrate they do not understand the mood of the nation or the nature of task of rebuilding support for the government.

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